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ABSTRACT

Described in these four contributions to a discussion group are options open to publishers and purchasers to improve textbooks and textbook selection. The first contribution (by Robert L. Brunelle) briefly introduces the discussion and stresses the urgency of creating higher standards for textbooks as part of overall educational reforms. The second paper (by Robert C. Bowen) reviews current steps taken by publishers to improve textbooks and suggests that adoption cycles should be shortened and more money allocated for developing textbooks. The third paper (separately titled, "An Overview of State Textbook Selection Procedures," by Phyllis Blaunstein) reviews state textbook selection and discusses the enormous influence large states that centralize textbook selection have on the publishing industry. Many suggestions are presented for improving and selecting textbooks and computer software at the state and local levels. The final contribution (by Laura Tynes) is a schedule of the Texas textbook adoption process, which began in January 1984 and will provide textbooks to school districts in mid-1986. (CB)

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NATIONAL FORUM ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION - INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Brief Introduction - Dr. Robert L. Brunelle, Commissioner of Education,
New Hampshire

How Can We Improve Both the Quality of Textbooks and the Process for Selecting
Them?

Textbooks generally reflect a position that is middle of the road. In order to sell a product which will be acceptable to teachers, administrators, school boards, various advocacy groups and the general public, the publisher has to develop a product with the fewest critics. The past fifteen years was characterized by widespread calls for making education interesting, no homework, text material which is culturally neutral and declining family interest and commitment which all contributed to less demanding textbooks. One could lay all the blame upon publishers, but they print what we in education will buy. Here again there is enough blame for all.

It is fact that in many schools, too many, the textbook is the curriculum in each subject and has a tremendous impact upon what, when and even how specific material is taught. It is also fact the educational decision maker must become more involved in textbook development and choice than they have been in the past.

Higher standards in textbooks based upon the latest research in achieving excellence as recommended by Professor Jeanne S. Chall of the Harvard Graduate School of Education is a must. The window of opportunity to raise standards will soon close; we must act now. The teacher must be consulted and become the senior partner in the development of textbooks which ask children to reach out and deal with the higher order skills so necessary to truly prepare children for tomorrow's world.

We must publish for the gifted and talented, the handicapped, the disadvantaged and the minority student in spite of the reality that the market for such books make it economically risky. New technology as applied to printing may be the answer to this cost problem.

I believe all the present actors must continue to have a piece of the action in the future, but with changed roles as outlined and closer collaboration with quicker response to needs. This is not just another swing of the pendulum in which educators call for new reforms; it is a time to reassess the past and present to give public education a future. If we fail in the reforms I believe public education will be dramatically reduced and new delivery systems developed to educate children.

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National Forum on Excellence in Education
Indianapolis, Indiana
December 6-8, 1983

Discussion Group:

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE BOTH THE QUALITY OF TEXTBOOKS
AND THE PROCESS FOR SELECTING THEM?

Remarks of Robert C. Bowen
Vice President and General Manager
Gregg Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company
and
Past Chairperson, School Division
Association of American Publishers

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Bowen

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Steps have been and are being taken; a lot is changing. Schools, as well as publishers, are reacting to a number of published (and sometimes contradictory) studies on the quality of education in the United States. In fact, all of us have been working to improve the quality of education before most of the studies were completed. All of this activity, together with the influx of technology into the classroom, has brought forth one very clear, very strong message:

Educators and publishers must continue to work hand in hand in providing the best possible education for our nation's students.

Even as we meet, research is being conducted by educators; for example, research is underway on how students learn through the use of the new technology and on how curricula can best be presented using the new technology along with complementary instructional materials. Educators share their research with publishers, who in turn incorporate the findings (after field testing and pilot programs) into instructional materials and share the findings with other educators on a nationwide basis through several vehicles: comprehensive teacher's manuals,

workshops, seminars, and consultant services, to name just a few. It is clearly a major role of a publisher, through its authors, to bring the latest educational research findings to life in America's classrooms through new or revised textbook programs.

REGARDING VALIDATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS . . .

In addition to serving as conduits, or clearinghouses, for educators' research, publishers themselves conduct extensive research. Very often, research and evaluation departments exist within publishing houses. These departments are staffed by trained researchers who assist authors and editors in keeping up to date on the latest educational research and on curriculum trends and in developing materials that fit the various curricula.

Publishers are constantly striving to improve the quality of instructional materials by:

- o Conducting post-publication reviews of existing programs by asking teachers who have used the programs in the classroom to provide in-depth analyses of the programs' effectiveness. These analyses help determine the content of the new editions (if, indeed, new editions are called for).
- o Sending proposals submitted for publication to educators for review before a "go" or "no go" publishing decision is made.
- o Sending manuscripts, chapter by chapter, to subject-matter experts for review, and making appropriate changes based on the feedback.
- o Field testing materials prior to publication, particularly when the materials present a new, innovative approach to the subject area.
- o Providing in-service training to teachers in the use of instructional materials. This training is becoming more important and more prevalent than ever with the advent of the new technology in the classroom.

- o Conducting educator focus groups, or round tables, on specific topics and programs to determine the positive and negative features of particular programs and to solicit suggestions for new publications.
- o Conducting nationwide "market" surveys designed to identify the common elements of a particular curriculum or subject area so that materials can be developed to meet specific needs.

REGARDING MORE RIGOROUS BOOKS . . .

The Commission's report cites declining SAT scores from 1963 to 1980. However, the causes of this decline do not lie solely in the educational community--including textbook publishers. A 1977 panel found a number of external causes, including changes in family structure and television viewing habits.¹ In addition, SAT scores leveled off in 1981; in 1982, they increased ever so slightly (2 points on the verbal, 1 point on the math).² While no firm conclusions can be made based on this slight increase, I think we would all hope that this improvement is the beginning of a trend and the direct result of actions already taken.

I would maintain that long before the current group of studies were released, educators and publishers were already taking steps to increase both the vocabulary and concept levels found in textbooks. As Richard Morgan, AAP's School Division Chairperson, pointed out at one of the regional forums held earlier this year, a study by Albert Harris and Milton Jacobson, published in 1982, indicated a 38 percent increase in vocabulary load in basal reading programs in grades 1 through 6 from 1972 to 1980. Moreover, noted teacher-educator Dr. Jeanne S. Chall states the following about the reading ability of children in the early grades:

The evidence shows that the children are doing better. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (1981) tested a national sample of 9-year-old children in 1971, in 1975, and in 1980. It found a significant increase in reading achievement on both retests, from 1970 to 1975 and from 1975 to 1980.³

While we are seeing improvements in this area, we must be attuned to the great danger of upgrading the reading level of materials beyond many students' capacity, particularly in the higher elementary and secondary grades.

In addition to the research methods cited earlier, authors and publishers have devised several methods of dealing with the variety of levels of students found in the classroom:

- o expanded teacher's manuals include suggestions for "stretching," or expanding on, the material in the textbook, as well as provide optional activities;
- o a variety of ancillary materials, including the use of technology, to enhance and extend the basic textbook;
- o consultant services to schools or teachers with special needs.

REGARDING THE SELECTION PROCESS . . .

Publishers face the problem of responding to a large diversity of interest groups. What appeals to one group may offend another, often causing authors and editors to seek "the middle of the road." However, teachers do have a diversity of textbook programs from which to choose. And yet, Dr. Chall asks:

What . . . makes a school system select one /series/ and not another? On the basis of what criteria do those states which still have state adoption policies "adopt" one series over the others? Could it be the reputation of the author, the extra services that a /publishing/ company makes available to the school through consultants, the fact that many teachers prefer the series because they studied with the author, or the skill of the company's representatives in promoting the materials.⁴

Some of these factors do indeed influence teachers serving on selection committees, but how much influence does the curriculum or subject area specialist have in the decision-making process?

The final decision on which text is adopted is most often arrived at through consensus. Under these circumstances, one teacher's strong objection to a text can eliminate it from consideration, regardless of the level of support it receives from other teachers. Often the selected text is the one nobody objected to strongly. Such a choice often creates great frustration and resentment from the more able and knowledgeable teachers or specialists who have based their selection on a studied evaluation of a text's content.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is that of adoption cycles. In some instances, adoption cycles are being extended eight and ten years, resulting in the use of outdated textbooks. Textbooks are becoming outdated much more rapidly than in the past due to (1) the fact that 80 percent of today's information will be replaced by 1990, (2) the fact that the amount of available information doubles every ten years, and (3) the ever-increasing amount of technological content. Serious consideration must be given to reviewing and revising the cycles.

REGARDING "THIN-MARKET" PUBLISHING . . .

Publishers work under the demands of a wide variety of needs and markets--including "thin" markets, such as those for disadvantaged students, the learning disabled, the gifted and talented, and students in special-interest elective courses. However, publishers must function under the restrictions of the economic realities of school publishing:

Textbook expenditures represent less than 1 percent of the school budget. Economics need to change for publishers to enthusiastically publish to these thin markets. If textbook expenditures were doubled, publishers would respond very quickly.

More important than publishers' economics, however, is the fact that textbook and equipment expenditures will have to increase substantially in order to help students learn about the new technology, as well as to utilize this technology in the instructional process. In 1978, 83 percent of public elementary schools and 93 percent of public secondary schools had library/media centers. However, total expenditures by these library/media centers averaged \$35 per pupil, and only 13 percent of the total expenditures was spent on books.⁵

Additionally, consider the following "important facts":

- o While school budgets have risen astronomically, the percentage allocated to textbooks has actually declined by 50 percent since 1966.
- o We spend an average of 12 cents per pupil per school day on instructional materials, about 1/2 the cost of a daily newspaper.
- o We spend an estimated \$20 billion annually on cigarettes and cigars, over \$50 billion on alcohol, over \$6 billion on cosmetics and fragrances--and we spend only \$1 billion on textbooks for our children.
- o For the presently projected cost of major weapons systems, we could supply all the textbooks for all the children who have ever sat in an American classroom since 1776--including the 45 million presently in school.

When you consider that teachers and students spend approximately 95 percent of their instructional time interacting with textbook materials, the above facts are astounding. Even more dramatic: In a country that depends on the education of its populace to protect its democratic system, it is difficult to believe that we spend more on dog food--\$3 billion in 1982--than on textbooks for our children.

If instructional materials are to be dramatically improved, they must better serve the wide divergence of learning needs and styles found in every American classroom. Certainly the new technologies offer great hope and opportunity toward this goal, but it is absolute folly to assume that this can be accomplished within the bounds of the current funding allocations for instructional materials.

A good deal could be accomplished by increasing funding so that 2 cents of each educational dollar goes toward the purchase of instructional materials:

1. The rigor could be increased without sacrificing the slower developing student.
2. The verification efforts could be increased to ensure that teachers have tools that will serve the wide-ranging needs of students in their classrooms.
3. A greater variety of programs could be developed that would allow for greater divergency in the selection process, as well as ensure that special programs are provided with adequate materials.
4. And finally, we could guarantee that the new technologies become an important part of all instructional systems.

As in the past, publishers look forward to working closely with all those seeking to improve the American educational system.

¹W. Willard Wirth, Report of the Advisory Panel on the Scholastic Aptitude Test Score Decline, College Entrance Examination Board, New York, 1977.

²Ernest L. Boyer, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America, Harper and Row, Publishers, New York, 1983.

³Jeanne S. Chall, Learning to Read: The Great Debate, Updated Edition, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1983.

⁴Chall, Learning to Read.

⁵U. S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1982-83, 103d Edition, Washington, D. C., 1982.

AN OVERVIEW OF STATE TEXTBOOK SELECTION PROCEDURES

Speech by Phyllis Blaunstein
Excellence Forum, Indianapolis, Indiana
December, 1983

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Winston Churchill once said, "It is not enough that we do our best; sometimes we have to do what's required." The movement for educational excellence compels us at this time to do more than our best. And textbook selection figures prominently in our goal of quality education.

According to one estimate, 75 percent of a student's classroom time and 90 percent of homework time is spent with textbook materials. Along with teachers, textbooks are students' major source of information. Frequently, a textbook is the only resource on a given subject to which some students will ever be exposed. Textbooks and companion teacher manuals shape and direct the content and methods of presentation used by many teachers. In addition, a recent study conducted by the Educational Products Information Exchange indicates that frequently students master 80% of textbook content before they have been issued the book. The impact of textbooks on the quality of education outcomes is obviously considerable. It is vital therefore, that we examine the strengths and shortcomings of the process by which textbooks are selected.

While textbook selection procedures are different in every state, they generally fall into four broad categories: Model 1 is the local selection model used in 27 states. In these states, there is complete local autonomy, with local districts developing evaluation criteria used by selection committees in screening materials. In model 2, involving 4 states, local districts choose texts from a

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state list. In Model 3, in 2 states, local districts select high school texts and use a state list for elementary school selections. For the 17 states in Model 4, a state committee, using state evaluation criteria, select textbooks for the entire state.

The degree of centralization for textbook selection has far-reaching consequences for textbooks used throughout the nation. It becomes very clear, using elementary marketing principles, that if one state provides a large enough market for a textbook, it can ask and sometimes get a publisher to change the content of the book. To save costs, the publishers will then print enough copies of the revised edition to meet sales demands throughout the country. Thus it is possible for one state to influence the content of textbooks used in almost all other states.

Also, in these large centralized selection states, there appears close relationship among the formal selection committee, public advocates for certain types of textbooks, and the publishers. Special citizen interest groups, such as the Creationists, frequently organize to influence the selection process in these states and thus change the content of textbooks across the entire nation.

Another issue is that centralized selection states often specify production quality -- such as paper, binding, and illustration. This makes it harder for small publishers to compete with larger firms due to the investment outlay necessary for meeting state requirements. Therefore, large states and large publishing companies have enormous influence over the content and type of textbooks used nationwide. And, it is safe to conclude that any attempt to influence the content of textbooks must be done with the cooperation of these large-market, centralized states.

States or local districts determine how often new materials will be adopted. These adoption cycles usually run from 2 to 8 years and depend primarily on budgetary considerations and administrative capacity. Assuming that trends toward shrinking fiscal resources for education are likely to continue, we can also assume that new instructional materials will be selected less frequently and that there will be a more limited range of materials available in the schools. In this time of rapid scientific and intellectual advances, there is a real danger that textbook materials could lag behind the thinking of the times even more than is currently the case.

What can be done, then, to improve the quality of textbook content?

- o First we need to identify problems in existing textbooks and develop clearly-defined, well-researched criteria for future selections. For example, many textbooks are currently designed to hit the middle. Remedial tests exist, but there is a genuine need for books to challenge the top 1/3 of students. Textbooks should have higher reading content and levels, contain more exercises that encourage the development of problem-solving skills; and should emphasize active student involvement and the application of knowledge to new situations.
- o Second, we need to coordinate policies affecting texts, testing, and curriculum. In many states and local districts there is little alignment between the content of textbooks, the curriculum within which the materials are used, or the tests used to evaluate learning.
- o Third, we should provide clarity to publishers regarding what schools want and who is responsible for determining what content is appropriate or inappropriate. Just as special interest groups have managed to influence the content of textbooks, so can a powerful coalition of

organized states develop new criteria which are clearly stated and which demand upgraded standards for all instructional materials.

- o Fourth, because textbook selection is a time-consuming process, requiring review of several hundred books, we need to provide educators with paid release time to participate in the selection committee. We must also ensure that committee members are persons who are eminent in the given subject matter.
- o Fifth, we must pay more attention to the rigor and content of teacher manuals. These determine how textbooks are used.
- o And last, we must provide more state and local resources for updating textbooks. To ensure that textbook content reflects state-of-the-art knowledge, we must allow states and local districts to select textbooks more frequently. There is no incentive for publishers, secure in providing texts to an 8-year market, to modify materials for the sole purpose of keeping up with times.

I would like to raise one final issue before I conclude. I think it would be shortsighted to discuss textbook selection to enhance quality in education without discussing a new instructional medium, as well -- computer software. With the advent of extensive computer use in the schools, should computer software selection be governed by the textbook adoption process?

Many state education agencies recognize the need for a variety of services related to software evaluation and review, such as a central library where software developers can place their materials. Some SEAs serve as a clearinghouse for locally developed software, establish standards for software, and review software through curriculum committees. But no state, to my knowledge, has established

comprehensive software selection policies using evaluation criteria based upon careful research.

We must begin by clarifying standards and criteria for software. Rather than using computers for drill and practice, we need to turn technology into a tool for expanding intelligence. Let's emphasize the development of higher intellectual skills taught through computer simulations, interactive tutorials, and demonstrations. Let's focus on more research into the types of learning that can be facilitated by the use of computers.

Then let us develop means to communicate our standards. Educators often know their curriculum needs but have difficulty in relating these to software producers. The companies do not have a clear understanding of what teachers want or will use; they develop programs and keep their fingers crossed.

There is a further need for funding to support creative software development. Few people are trained to write quality software who are also knowledgeable about teaching and learning.

We also need to issue guidelines regarding the copying of software. Rampant illegal piracy of software is a significant disincentive for producers who face extremely high costs in developing programs.

Finally, the use of technology must also be coordinated with the selection of textbooks, tests and curriculum. Computers can stimulate a rapid expansion of knowledge; for example, second graders using LOGO learn geometric

forms and spatial relationships. This knowledge is not reflected in their textbooks.

NASBE is awaiting funding for a program that will approach these problems and opportunities involved in the selection of quality instructional materials. Our members feel strongly that this issue is central to the education reform movement.

Other issues will undoubtedly emerge as we consider the link between educational excellence and instructional materials such as textbooks and software. These, however, are some that we must immediately address. We cannot afford to do less than what is required with instructional materials if we aspire to excellence in education.

TEXAS TEXTBOOK ADOPTION PROCESS

Texas was in the process of addressing all the issues mentioned in the "Nation at Risk" report before it was released. Our major reform of curriculum standards will begin implementation during the next school year. We also have made changes in our textbook adoption process which bring it close to perfection.

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Texas Textbook Adoption Process

Texas statutes provide for the selection and purchase of textbooks for use in the public schools, grades pre-kindergarten through twelve.

The State Board of Education annually issues a proclamation calling for textbooks in selected areas and grade levels based upon an eight-year balanced adoption cycle. The proclamation lists the subjects and grade levels, the quotas of books (usually 110% of subject or grade level), a description of the essential elements to be included in student textbooks, and general instructions for both student texts and teacher materials. State Board of Education rules include general content requirements, binding and print specifications, and specific procedures and requirements for the total process.

A state textbook committee representing each of the twenty-seven congressional districts and with expertise in each of the subject areas is recommended by the Commissioner of Education and appointed by the State Board of Education. Each committee member selects a maximum of six advisors in each subject area, one of whom must be a lay citizen.

Publishers file samples of books with the Texas Education Agency, regional education service centers, state textbook committee members, and committee advisors. Publishers make presentations to committee members and their advisors.

Joint public hearings are held by the Commissioner of Education and the state textbook committee at which any citizen of the state, educator or lay citizen may make comments concerning textbooks. After reviewing textbooks with their advisors, the textbook committee meets and ballots in open session to select no more than five books in each category. Their recommendations are made to the Commissioner of Education, who may remove books from the list but may not add books. The Commissioner negotiates with publishers for changes and corrections to be made and submits a recommended list of books to the State Board of Education. The Board holds a public hearing at which citizens may comment on books. After discussion the Board adopts textbooks and authorizes the Board Chairman to sign contracts with publishers.

Samples of books are distributed to local districts where local committees review and select one or more of the five books in each category. Orders are placed with TEA and copies are distributed to districts.

Following is an abbreviated schedule of the adoption process that will begin in January 1984 and will provide textbooks for school districts beginning September 1986.

Date	Activity
January 1984	- Commissioner submits Preliminary Proclamation 61 to State Board of Education Committee for discussion. - Commissioner initiates screening of nominations for state textbook committee.
February	SBOE holds public hearing on and continues discussion and revision of Proclamation.
March 1984	- SBOE issues Proclamation 61. - Proclamation mailed to publishers desiring copies.
March 1985	ESCs designate and notify TEA of persons supervising textbook process.

April 1985.

Activity

SBOE appoints State Textbook Committee.

Publishers file with TEA Statement of Intent to Bid Textbooks and data forms that include:
-Subject, title, copyright, authors and retail price of texts.

-Dates books/systems will be available.

List of complimentary supplementary materials.

Publisher files two samples of student editions and teacher editions or manuals with TEA.

• Publisher files samples of student and teacher's editions in each ESC.

• Publishers file complimentary supplementary materials with TEA and ESCs.

• List of all titles filed mailed to every school district, interested persons, and ESCs.

• Each ESC issues news release concerning availability of textbooks for inspection by public.

May 1985

• Organizational and orientation meeting of State Textbook Committee.

• Textbook Committee appoints a maximum of 6 advisors in each subject area, one of whom must be a lay person.

• Textbook Committee members and advisors must schedule at least one full hearing on each subject with every publisher beginning in May.

June 1985

• Official samples with price data must be filed with TEA.

• Written comments concerning textbooks filed with Commissioner.

July 1985

• Textbook Committee and advisors begin no contact period with publishers and others.

• Commissioner publishes procedures for hearing before Commissioner and State Textbook Committee.

August 1985

• Final date for advisors to file suggested changes, corrections, and deletions for textbooks with Textbook Committee.

August (5 days)

• Joint public hearings before State Textbook Committee and Commissioner of Education.

21 days after close of hearings

• Written responses to testimony presented at hearings filed with Commissioner.

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Date	Activity
September 1985	State Textbook Committee considers transcript of hearings, written responses, and recommendations of advisors.
September	- State Textbook Committee ballots on textbooks by category using written ballots. - Textbook Committee submits recommendations of textbooks to Commissioner. Committee by statutory authority may select no more than 5 books per category or grade level.
September/ October	Commissioner schedules hearings related to irregularities and misconduct.
September	Commissioner considers recommendations from textbook committee, transcripts of hearings, and written responses.
October 1985	- Citizens request permission to appear before SBOE. - Commissioner's Preliminary Report of Recommendations given to SBOE. Commissioner has statutory authority to remove books but may not add to list. - Commissioner sends official notice of changes and corrections to publishers, SBOE, ESCs, and Textbook Committee.
November 1985	- SBOE considers complaints concerning irregularities and misconduct. - SBOE considers report of Commissioner on textbooks. - SBOE holds public hearing on recommendations of textbooks. - Publishers file official bids. - SBOE considers adoption of books recommended by Commissioner and length of contracts and quotes. - SBOE considers bids and authorizes Chairman to sign contracts. - Final list of changes mailed to publishers, SBOE and Brailers. - List of adopted texts mailed to local school districts.
December 1985	Local boards of trustees appoint textbook committees with superintendents as chairmen.

Date	Activity
January 1986	Samples of textbooks shipped to local districts.
March 1986	Local textbook committees submit reports to local boards of trustees.
March 31, 1986	Local districts file textbook selection reports.
June 1 - July 15, 1986	New books are shipped to districts.